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CIA Colby, William  
Commonwealth  
Club

# CIA chief barnstorms here

By Dexter Waugh

William Colby, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, carried his barnstorming attempt to win the hearts and minds of the American people into San Francisco's Commonwealth Club yesterday.

Colby, speaking to a capacity crowd of 1100 in the Sheraton-Palace's Gold Ballroom, reiterated past testimony before congressional committees and the President's panel headed by Vice President Rockefeller, and expressed his belief that "the only way to restore the confidence of the American people is to explain what the CIA is really all about."

The American public, he said, "recognizes it is dangerous to live in the world without intelligence . . . but at the same time the proliferation of charges (against the CIA) has led the public to wonder if American intelligence surveillance has not become a threat to our republic and its ideals."

He said the CIA "has made a few mistakes over the past 27 years," but that these "nits and picks of yesterday" should not be allowed to "injure American intelligence today."

"I believe in the old saying, in not throwing the baby out with the bath water . . . I believe American intelligence can be responsible and accountable to the American people and its elected representatives and at the same time retain those secrets essential to the protection of our country."

He said CIA information was used by congressional

committees on a periodic basis, and that "unclassified background discussions" had proved valuable to "an increasing number of serious journalists and commentators."

Colby said he supports the development of new control and accountability procedures for the CIA. "My only plea is that these procedures also take into consideration the unique and fragile character of many intelligence operations," he said.

Alluding to newspaper accounts of massive domestic surveillance by the CIA, Colby said CIA activities had been "neither massive, nor domestic, nor illegal."

Asked about the CIA's role in Operation Phoenix, Colby described that program as one initiated by the South Vietnamese government to counter "terrorist" activities in that country.

"Our function," said Colby, "was to make it a better program. We took a number of steps to improve the treatment of the people captured, to make sure the leaders rather than the followers were captured . . ."

"It was a badly misunderstood accusation that this was an attempt to go out and kill these people. We wanted either to get them to defect or to capture them. They were worth a lot more if captured."

Of the 20,500 Vietnamese killed during the program, Colby said 85 per cent were slain "in regular military operations and identified thereafter as members of the communist apparatus in the population. There were very few cases where they

were improperly killed."

How many of these Phoenix agents were among recent refugees to this country? "We don't know at the moment," said Colby.

He also reiterated that

the CIA's role in Chile during the reign of Salvador Allende was to "help maintain the democratic forces so they could defeat Allende legally in 1976 . . . we had nothing to do with the overthrow."